

BROCKTON, MASS.
ENTERPRISE-TIMES

AUG 3 1972
E - 55,308

Bombing of the Dikes

DESPITE ALL CHARGES that the dikes of North Vietnam have been *deliberately* bombed by planes of the United States, logic compels us to believe otherwise. If this country were engaged in a *deliberate* attempt to destroy the 2,500-mile-long network of earthen dams, some still unrepaired after last year's extra-high water, the damage to the dike system would be astronomically greater than all evidence at the moment indicates that it is.

And since the Rev. Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, Secretary General of the World Council of Churches, and Kurt Waldheim, Secretary General of the United Nations, both admit that their information to the contrary from Hanoi is "private and unofficial," the CIA report that American bombing has caused scattered damage to dikes at 12 different locations is quite credible.

The President has often conceded, as have other military spokesmen, that there has been some inadvertent damage to the dikes. Furthermore, the U.S. Defense Department has insisted that far worse damage to the dikes was caused by last year's floods than by this year's bombing.

The whole issue can be placed in some sort of perspective by the observations of syndicated columnist Joseph Kraft, now in North Vietnam to assess the outlook for peace in the wake of President Nixon's recent diplomatic moves.

"Everything I have done in North Vietnam has been arranged by hosts," he admits. "They establish the emphasis of my coverage. They decided whom I saw and did not see. . . .

"There is no doubt that the dikes have been hit by American bombs. I have seen with my own eyes two undoubted examples of such hits. Indeed, given the number of American sorties (about 200 a day recently) and the extent of the dikes open (about 2,000 miles), it would be remarkable if there were not some hits on the dikes."

And that's what we believe.